

Western Australia: Punched Holes.

Two fair collectors were comparing notes and collections. "I have some lovely Western Australians on entires," said the one; "they were sent home by my grandfather, and have been locked up ever since." "Oh, how dreadful!" replied the other, pointing out the holes officially punched; "he must have been locked up too!" Then she read: "Western Australia. Issue of 1864. Some of the . . . stamps are found with holes pierced through them. This is done before giving them to convicts for payment of their letters home: by this means their letters can be easily recognised."

The letters were locked up again, and that old Oppen album was placed out of bounds.—*The Stamp Dealer.*

Amateur and Dealer.

Last week I said a few words under the heading "Amateur and Professional," arising out of an editorial of Mr. Crofton's in the *Philatelic Journal of India*.

This week I wish to deal with the latter portion of Mr. Crofton's remarks, in the course of which he makes a by no means thinly veiled attack upon some of the leading members of the R.P.S.I.

Mr. Crofton, in the course of his remarks, divides dealers into about five classes:

- 1st. The dealer with a shop front and a bold advertiser.
- 2nd. The dealer with no shop and a small advertiser.
- 3rd. The man who professes not to be a dealer, but who makes a good income from stamps.
- 4th. The man who is constantly making new collections in order to sell them at a profit.
- 5th. Private dealers who are of no use to anybody, including speculators in new issues, etc., etc.

Mr. Crofton claims that his Class 3 is well represented in the Royal Philatelic Society. With this I quite disagree. I have the pleasure and honour of knowing nearly all the leading collectors in the R.P.S. personally, and among them I number some of my best friends, and I am in a position to assure Mr. Crofton that there is hardly a collector in the Society who makes a good income from stamps.

There have been, and I trust there always will be, col-

lectors in the Society of great philatelic ability, and whose desires often outrun their income. There are many men who take up a country or a group of countries, and in a few years they have exhausted all there is to learn about the stamps of their group, are these gentlemen to be termed "dealers" if they decide to sell their collections and turn their energies to pastures new?

Such arguments and many others used by Mr. Crofton in this article appear to me to be futile in the extreme.

Mr. Crofton further states:—

"When a dealer employs a man, that man is an employee of the trade . . . and in our opinion any one who is paid for his writing by a stamp firm is undoubtedly a professional . . . we look upon any attempt to put them on a higher plane than ordinary dealing as supremely ridiculous."

Now, I think that Mr. Crofton goes too far here, and that not only are his remarks in bad taste, but they are also unsound.

First of all, what is a "dealer"?

Chambers's Dictionary says: "One who deals—a trader."

And to "deal" is to "transact business." Now, the R.P.S. says in effect: "Our Society must consist of amateurs."

Then in its well-considered regulations it goes on to say that it does not bar any one from being a member who acts as compiler, author, or editor of any publication, as long as they are not *dealers* in stamps.

According to Mr. Crofton, the R.P.S. must bar such men as Mr. Bacon, who has written several handbooks, Major Evans and Mr. Castle, who edit magazines, simply because these gentlemen, whose time is valuable, accept remuneration for work of this nature.

If one carried out Mr. Crofton's Utopian ideas the Society would probably lose nine-tenths of its members, and these the very men who have helped the Society to attain its present position.

Surely Mr. Crofton cannot argue that the mere fact of writing handbooks or editing papers is "dealing" or transacting business in stamps; and yet that is what he seems to suggest.

—C. J. Phillips in *Gibbons' Stamp Weekly*, 19.12.08.

In the Stamp Market

BY O. REGINALD GUM

A Lesson in Cataloguing.

Mr. C. J. Phillips is very severe in his strictures on our Auctioneers concerning their methods of cataloguing. Speaking of the catalogue of the celebrated Koch collection now being sold in Paris, he writes:—

Following the example set by Mr. J. Bernichou, Messrs. Gilbert and Köhler have once more shown us how an auction catalogue of stamps should be written, and I consider that all our London auctioneers, without any exception, might take lessons from their French confrères.

Each good stamp is most carefully described, and EVERY FAULT, EVEN THE MOST MINUTE, is pointed out. All stamps that are mentioned singly are guaranteed in all respects. All scarce stamps or rare obliterations are illustrated, and in the third catalogue of this sale there are no less than twelve full-sized plates of illustrations, a most important feature for those who are unable to attend personally.

I shall have to interview my old friend, Mr. Gwyer, who catalogues Glendinning's sales, on this pronouncement. I suspect his comment will be "Phillips must

have been hard up for copy."

But I am not so sure that the criticism is so easily disposed of.

Any way, there is one man who will not want such exact cataloguing, and that is the bargain hunter.

India: the Best Stamps for Investment.

The *Philatelic Journal of India* being asked for an opinion on the best Indian stamps to buy as an investment, had no hesitation in replying the half anna King postage only, On H.M.S.

Our Advertisers' Offers this Week.

Mr. Peckitt offers a picked lot of Antigua of all issues. Mr. D. Field's special bargain is Paraguay 5c. on 6c. yellow-brown, rare error with inverted surcharge, only one sheet of 100 discovered, at 1s. 6d.

Messrs. Hugo Griebert & Co. offers rare essays, proofs, entire original sheets, re-constructed plates, &c. at bargain prices.

Mr. W. Houtzamer offers British South African provisionals of 1891 and 1896 at special prices.